

Encouraging start by new look Wycombe

WYCOMBE Wanderers paraded their new array of talent at Loakes Park on Saturday and despite going down 2-0 to Derby County, there were enough encouraging signs to suggest new manager Ted Powell will have a more than useful side this season.

It's a long time since we've seen so many new players at Wycombe and as many as nine were 'strangers' to the majority of the crowd. Bobby Davies, John Priestley, Ian Pearson, Mick Sorenson all made their home debuts while Gavin Fraser, Glen Swaby, Alan Davies played a few friendlies last season. Alan Phillips, skipper on Saturday, was back at centre half after a year's absence while two young players were given a run out — Tony Hughes and Grenville Baverstock.

There was no John Delaney, Terry Reardon Ray Eaton, Geoff Anthony, Dave Alexander — all now with other clubs — while Howard Kennedy, Dylan Evans and Mick Hollifield were absent on holiday.

So the accent was on youth as the Blues lined up against an equally young Derby side, strengthened by the former England centre half Roy McFarland, who is still trying to recover full fitness after a broken leg. Alan Cork, centre forward, was the only other player with first team experience while many of the visitors were members of the team that finished second in the Central League last season.

Of the Wycombe newcomers, one youngster made a particularly favourable impression — Gavin Fraser. He was used up front and in midfield and looked an extremely skilful player in either position. Despite his lean build, Gavin showed plenty of aggression while his passing suggested that he could be the man to replace Reardon in midfield. The way he combined with Tony Horseman augurs well.

Many eyes were on new centre forward Ian Pearson. Plymouth's top goalscorer in the reserves for the last two years, he was up against a useful centre half but stuck to his task well and got in a couple of promising strikes. One potential weakness up front is the lack of height, although this was accentuated by the absence of Evans on Saturday.

The two players who toured with Wanderers in Italy,

Wycombe Wanderers 0, Derby County 2 REPORT BY STUART EARP

Bobby Davies and John Priestley, both looked useful at left back and central midfield while the experienced Alan Davies worked busily. Glen Swaby is deceptively skilful while Alan Phillips seemed to have lost none of his ability at centre back and teamed up well with Keith Mead.

It was Swaby who got in Wycombe's first effort after nine minutes on Saturday, stretching 'keeper Cherry with a left foot drive. But in the main, Wanderers were restricted to only a handful of dangerous attacks in the first half.

Derby went ahead after 33 minutes when Priestley lost possession in midfield. Corrish was quick to send Cork through the square defence and the big centre forward, who looked the image of former Derby star Roger

Davies, had little trouble in beating the oncoming Peter Spittle.

Second goal came four minutes after the interval when Fox crossed from the bye-line. The ball bobbed a yard or two from the line and Mead, trying to control, only succeeded in pushing it past his own goalkeeper. Keith will be glad to get that one over with!

Wanderers showed more flair up front in this second half and both Pearson and Fraser went close to reducing the deficit. But Wycombe had a tendency to take too long in building moves which gave County all the time they needed to organise their defence. No doubt when the players are more used to each other, some of the passing back will disappear but on Saturday it made their attacks far too slow.

Graham 'Jock' Mackenzie, a half time substitute, gave Cherry a scare with a 20 yard drive following a corner after 83 minutes while Bobby Davies joined the attack with a shot that flew just wide. Just before the close, Pearson saw his effort headed off the line by Chesters.

Manager Powell will obviously be making changes in the series of pre-season friendlies but on Saturday's showing, he obviously has a good deal of talent at his fingertips — young talent at that.

WYCOMBE: P. Spittle; P. Birdseye (sub M. Sorenson 45 mins), K. Mead (sub G. Baverstock 68 mins), A. Phillips, M. Davies; G. Swaby (sub G. Mackenzie 45 mins), J. Priestley (sub A. Hughes 68 mins), A. Davies; A. Horseman, I. Pearson, G. Fraser.

DERBY: I. Cherry; D. Fox, R. Corrish, R. McFarland (sub M. Webb 50 mins), W. Murray; D. Hunt, C. Chamberlain, M. Falconer; J. Chesters (sub C. Arthur 50 mins), A. Cork, P. Bartlett (sub Crawford 68 mins).

Referee: A. Ward (North London).
Half time: 0-1. **Goalscorers:** Derby — Cork (33), Mead o.g. (49).
Attendance: 650.



Roy McFarland, the former England centre half, who played 50 minutes for Derby County in Saturday's friendly against Wycombe Wanderers.

'DONS' VISIT

WYCOMBE Wanderers stage their second friendly of the season tomorrow (Wednesday) when they take on Wimbledon at Loakes Park.

John Maskell is set to take over from Peter Spittle in goal, while Dave Bullock is also likely to play in the back four. There is a slight doubt over left back Bobby Davies, who suffered a knock in Saturday's 2-0 defeat against Derby County.

Wimbledon also lost their first friendly when they crashed 3-0 at Slough on Saturday. The Dons have lost top striker Keiron Somers during the close season to Slough but the remainder of last year's team have stayed together.

One newcomer is Leo Markham who joined from Bedford. Markham was on the verge of coming to Wycombe this term but signed instead for the Southern League club.

Wanderers will again be trying out their young squad but manager Ted Powell is still waiting for three players to return from holiday before he can start sorting out a team for the first league game on August 21.

Wimbledon: Guy, Tilley, Markham, Bryant, Edwards, Bassett, Rice, Cooke, Connell, Holmes, Leslie.